

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 181635 TOSEC 080049
ORIGIN SS-25

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APPROVED BY NEA - MR. VELIOTES

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 181635 TOSEC 080049

EXDIS, FOR ATHERTON AND DAY FROM NEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, SY, US

SUBJECT: SYRIAN JEWRY

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1. LAST FEBRUARY, WE PROVIDED SOLARZ WITH PROPOSED TEXT OF A CONGRESSIONAL MESSAGE TO ASSAD EXPRESSING APPRECIATION FOR DEVELOPMENTS IN SYRIAN JEWRY WHICH WE LATER DELIVERED IN CONFIDENCE TO ASSAD AFTER SOME EIGHT CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS HAD SIGNED IT. SOLARZ ASKED US FOR ANOTHER SUCH TEXT, AND WE PROVIDED HIM THE FOLLOWING. (SOLARZ HOPES TO HAVE ALL SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN WHO HAVE VISITED SYRIA SINCE RELATIONS WERE RESTORED SIGN THE LETTER.)

2. BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER: DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, HAVE PAID VISITS TO SYRIA SINCE THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO
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COUNTRIES. SOME OF US HAVE BEEN HONORED WITH MEETINGS WITH YOU AND ALL OF US HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST WITH MEMBERS OF YOUR GOVERNMENT. WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE STRENGTHENING OF FRIENDLY AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

IT IS IN THAT SPIRIT THAT WE HAVE FOLLOWED WITH CLOSE

INTEREST DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING SYRIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY. EARLIER THIS YEAR, WE WERE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED BY THE DECISION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC TO ELIMINATE OR RELAX PREVIOUS REGULATIONS AFFECTING SYRIAN JEWRY.

IN RECENT DAYS, WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED AND GLADDENED BY THE DECISIONS TO PERMIT THE DEPARTURE FOR THE UNITED STATES OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE SYRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY FOR PURPOSES OF MARRIAGE, EDUCATION, AND FAMILY REUNION. THESE DECISIONS SHOW THAT SYRIA DEALS WITH THE SITUATION OF SYRIAN JEWRY ON A VERY HUMAN AND INDIVIDUAL SCALE.

WE WISH YOU TO KNOW, MR. PRESIDENT, OF OUR GRATITUDE FOR YOUR ROLE IN FACILITATING TIES AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SYRIA'S JEWISH COMMUNITY AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF SYRIAN ORIGIN LOCATED IN THE UNITED STATES. WE HOPE THAT THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THESE TWO COMMUNITIES--OF A COMMON RELIGIOUS FAITH AND WITH A SHARED HERITAGE IN THEIR SYRIAN HOMELAND--WILL EXPAND AND FLOURISH, CONSTITUTING ANOTHER BOND OF FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SYRIAN AND AMERICAN PEOPLES. RESPECTFULLY, END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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